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Domain Expertise

New Green Icons in GSA Advantage!

GSA has added two new green icons for products in GSA Advantage! A “Safer Choice” icon is available for products that meet the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [Safer Choice standard](#), demonstrating that the product is safe for human health and the environment. The second icon is an “EPA Recommended” label, which is available for products that conform to one of the [specification, standards, and ecolabels](#) recommended by the EPA. The new icons are not yet available in the Formatted Product Tool (FPT).

Schedule contractors that qualify for a Safer Choice or EPA Recommended icon are encouraged to update their product information in SIP, EDI, and all other relevant mediums in accordance with clause 552.238-72 Identification of Products That Have Environmental Attributes.

GSA also removed the following icons from Schedules Input Program (SIP): EPA primary metals free, NESHAP, and PRIME. The icons were mainly used by Global Supply and had low usage rates by Schedule contractors.

[Read More](#)



Federal Marketplace Matters

Nationwide Survey of Cybersecurity Practices

NIST, in partnership with GSA, is currently leading a nationwide survey of cybersecurity practices. Your organization can now use a secure and convenient online tool based on the Cybersecurity Framework. We would greatly appreciate your response to our questionnaire.

The questionnaire should take a senior cybersecurity executive less than 40 minutes to complete. It is comprised of mostly multiple-choice questions and can be accessed by simply clicking on the following link to register and take the survey:

<https://cyberchain.rhsmith.umd.edu/>

Your name, contact information and organizational information will be kept secure, confidential, anonymized & aggregated in all of our analysis & reporting. For more information about our project and the data integrity policies we have in place, please go to: <http://csrc.nist.gov/scrm/pamp-assessment-faqs.html>

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GSA's TDR Roundtable: Can we talk?

Last week, GSA hosted a roundtable discussion on the Transactional Data Reporting (TDR) rule and what it means for GSA's agency customers and contractors. After listening to the TDR roundtable dialogue, the question that arises is whether GSA is actively listening to the questions and concerns of its customers and its contractors. Here are some examples:

First, during the discussion, GSA characterized the federal government as a "Fortune One" company in terms of its procurement spending. This characterization was to support TDR, category management, strategic sourcing, and the centralized management of federal markets, but it was not the consensus view of the panel. Indeed, one of the panelists, a GSA customer, appeared to have a different perspective citing differences in mission, organizational structures, and behaviors across government and within agencies. Interestingly, industry's view of the market aligns with this perspective. The government is simply too big and too varied for a one-size-fits-all approach. Each day, Coalition members provide best value support to meet each agency's unique mission requirements.

Moreover, this "Fortune One" philosophy rests on the view that the federal government can drive/shape the commercial market to its advantage. This perspective runs counter to Congressional and Department of Defense (DoD) recognition that government procurement does not drive the commercial marketplace. Congress and DoD are streamlining acquisition processes, focusing on commercial item contracting and reducing oversight risk, in a strategic effort to acquire commercial innovation and solutions to support the warfighter. Incidentally, the Coalition applauds the Congressional efforts to streamline DoD acquisition.

Second, there are clearly different views regarding the utility of collecting transactional data on services. Two panelists (one representative from industry and one from a GSA customer) expressed their concern that the utility of TDR is limited in the context of services acquisition, in part because the unique nature of service requirements/approaches inhibits direct comparisons.

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Federal Marketplace Matters

Trump Administration looking to continue IT savings through category Management

Early conversations suggest President Donald Trump will look to sustain the progress the previous administration made using category management to drive IT savings, a senior acquisition official said Wednesday.

Trump's White House is looking at IT risk management beyond the obvious cybersecurity concerns, and category management plays role on the acquisition side of that, Bill Zielinski, deputy assistant commissioner of category management at the General Services Administration, said at Verizon's Government of the Future Summit, produced by FedScoop.

"What we've heard consistently in our conversations with the new administration folks is they are very much interested in figuring out how we could manage risk in the federal IT enterprise. I know when we talk about risk in the federal IT enterprise, a lot of people automatically go to cybersecurity— that certainly is a piece of it, and a large piece of it," Zielinski said, pointing to the forthcoming [executive order](#) from the administration on cybersecurity, which he expects to see "very soon."

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GSA Update on GSA Cybersecurity SINS

In a recent blogpost, Shon Lyublanovits, IT Security Subcategory Manager and Director of Security Services at GSA provided an update on the Highly Adaptive Cybersecurity Services (HACS) Special Item Numbers (SINs). Since they were first established in September 2016, GSA has added 34 vendors to the following HACS SINs:

- 132-45A: Penetration Testing
- 132-45B: Incident Response
- 132-45C: Cyber Hunt
- 132-45D: Risk and Vulnerability Assessment

According to the blog, all current IT Schedule 70 holders that offer cybersecurity services will eventually be required to migrate to the HACS SINs.

In order to maximize success against potential cyber attacks, GSA has been working in partnership with the national security community to ensure the rapid delivery of emerging cyber technology. These efforts include increasing communication and collaboration with Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense and engaging government and industry to expand utilization of the HACS SINs.



Congress presses VA to go commercial on IT

Congress is once again looking to the Department of Veterans Affairs to decide whether to keep and improve its home-grown, open source Vista health record system, or move to a commercial provider.

"Retaining or replacing Vista is a make-or-break decision for VA. It must be made deliberately and objectively," said Rep. Phil Roe (R-Tenn.), the chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, at a Feb. 7 hearing.

Vista Evolution, a five-year plan to improve the VA's system, is set to be completed in 2018.

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Federal Marketplace Matters

US defense budget boost: Congressional hawks face the clock

U.S. President Donald Trump may be signing executive orders at a furious pace, but for defense spending, the White House and Congress are looking ahead to a thorny agenda and a shrinking schedule.

Top of the list is the overdue 2017 defense appropriations bill, which lawmakers punted with a continuing resolution last year that expires April 28. That deadline is likely to come sandwiched between a Trump budget amendment that favors defense and the White House's 2018 budget request.

But none of it is the main event on Capitol Hill. For Congress, the real battle royale is over Trump nominees, including Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch, and the repeal and replacement of the Affordable Care Act. Democrats don't have the votes to block Cabinet appointees, but they're showing they will use procedural maneuvers to delay the Republican agenda.

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Federal procurement reforms start by naming the right type of leaders, experts tell Trump

The next administrator for the Office of Federal Procurement Policy — whomever that person ends up being — will have a significant to-do list as they walk in the door. There is a host of Obama administration-era priorities that industry disdains — category management, transactional data rule and a stack of executive orders that many would like to be undone or changed significantly.

Before the new OFPP administrator begins the analysis to set their priorities, a group of former OFPP, Defense Department and agency acquisition executives are urging the administration to focus as much on the “who” as the “what.”

The Procurement Roundtable, which includes former OFPP Administrator **Allan Burman**, former OFPP Deputy Administrator **Rob Burton**, former acting Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology **Ken Oscar**, former General Services Administration Senior Procurement Executive **David Drabkin** and many others, sent a [letter in January](#) to then President-elect **Donald Trump** outlining three areas the new administration should focus its efforts to improve the acquisition process.

The most important suggestion, however, isn't about what needs to change or improve, but who is leading the overall effort.

“We thought it was the right time to reinforce with the President-elect the importance of picking the right candidates for the various position he has to fill from OFPP administrator to the GSA administrator to the various chief acquisition officers and undersecretaries. In considering their backgrounds in people he might select, having government and industry experience is key.

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Federal Marketplace Matters

GSA Issues RFI for Entity Identification and Validation Services

GSA has released a Request for Information for government-wide entity identification and validation services. The government has a need for assignment and maintenance of a unique numbering system to consistently identify specific commercial, nonprofit, or government entities. The overarching government requirement is for business identification and validation services associated with that unique number.

Currently, these services are provided by Dun and Bradstreet (D&B), whose contract with GSA expires in 2018. The government is exploring all viable means of continuing to meet its ongoing need for entity identification and validation services after the contract's expiration. Additionally, both the FAR and 2CFR regulations have recently been revised to remove any proprietary references to Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) and DUNS.

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Educational

Fighting federal procurement fraud (Commentary)

Believe it or not, procurement fraud is the second largest economic crime in terms of losses, trailing only theft. This statistic usually gets overlooked, but it's one that has affected the federal government for decades. In fact, according to [PricewaterhouseCoopers](#), procurement fraud impacts an astounding 29 percent of all organizations each year, ranging from Fortune 500 companies to small businesses to government agencies.

Procurement fraud occurs when a company offers goods or services but either fails to deliver, under delivers or rigs the process against the rules to gain an advantage over competitors. Some common forms of procurement fraud include bribery, bid-rigging, embezzlement and submission of false claims. This is especially concerning when you are talking about business to government procurement, considering that money comes straight from the taxpayer. Government needs to find better ways to protect itself from this type of fraud.

In recent years, fraud experts have turned to a hybrid analytical approach to fraud monitoring that incorporates both solid business best practices and advanced analytics to greatly reduce the amount lost due to fraud.

First and foremost, government agencies need to start by following good business rules. While these rules are likely already in place, sometimes a good reminder to procurement officials can be helpful. A couple examples of business rules include:

- If bidders show up on a disbarred list, don't give them a contract. It may sound simple, but it is a rule that agencies sometimes fail to follow.
- Watch for too many invoices coming in on the same day. Take the time to check out each one thoroughly as fraudsters hope the volume of work leads to things being overlooked.

Business rules like those — and more sophisticated ones — can be coded into an analytics-driven fraud detection system. However, business rules typically only catch simple schemes and data entry errors.

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Upcoming Events

February 22-23 Southwest Acquisition Center's Industry Event for 56, 66 & 73

[See more information](#)

March 1, 2017 CGP MAS Basic Training-The Nuts and Bolts

[To Register](#)

March 7-8, 2017 IFMIPS 51V, Industry Day Event

[Register](#)

March 28 -29, 2017 IFMIPS 03FAC Industry Day Event

[Register](#)

April 25-26, 2017 the GSA Federal Acquisition Training Symposium Huntsville, Alabama,

[Registration Details](#)

June 6, 2017 the Professional Services Industry Day in Tacoma, Washington.

[See more information](#)

TGG will be represented at all GSA Industry events above so if you are not able to attend contact your TGG consultant with any questions you may have.

April 13 2017 B2G Conference & Expo Joint Base Langley / Eustice

[More Info](#)

Compliance

Health Services Contractor Agrees to Pay \$3.818 Million to Settle False Claims Act Allegations

Baltimore, Maryland – Comprehensive Health Services, Inc. has agreed to pay the United States \$3,818,881 to settle allegations under the False Claims Act that it submitted false claims to the United States by double-billing and mischarging for medical services in connection with work performed on an Internal Revenue Service (“IRS”) contract.

Comprehensive Health Services, Inc. (“CHSi”) is a Florida-based company that is one of the United States’ largest providers of workforce medical services. CHSi implements and manages for the United States government and commercial companies customized medical programs for large workforces that range from pre-placement, pre-deployment, and fitness-for-duty medical examinations to medical surveillance and health wellness programs. In February 2009, CHSi was awarded an IRS contract, under which it was required to provide medical services to IRS-Criminal Investigation special agent applicants and incumbent special agent personnel. Among other things, the IRS contract required CHSi to provide pre-placement medical examinations to evaluate special agent applicants’ medical qualifications. The pre-placement medical examinations included a range of tests, including resting electrocardiograms and vision tests, that were required to be billed as part of a bundled fee. The IRS contract also required that CHSi conduct certain medical tests to determine incumbent agents’ ability to participate in physical fitness programs and their fitness for duty. Such medical services included physical fitness examinations which were to be billed only if such examinations were medically necessary, and blood specimen collection, which was to be billed as part of a bundled fee.

The settlement agreement resolves allegations that from April 2009 through April 2014, CHSi knowingly double-charged the United States for vision screenings, resting electrocardiograms, and for the collection of blood specimens provided to IRS agents when those costs were already included in the bundled price for the IRS new applicant pre-placement exam.

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